

On the old side are such retentions as that of "passive congestion" in diseases of the liver with the recommendation that "dry cups over the liver may be used."

The amount of bibliography at the end of different subjects is distinctly uneven. The reference space for poliomyelitis (six pages of text) is twice as large as that for tuberculosis (80 pages of text). In infectious diseases the references are given at the end of each individual entity. This is likewise true for diseases of the heart and those of the blood. On the other hand, in gastrointestinal diseases the references appear only at the end of a large section, and in renal diseases they are all lumped together. The use of Oxford Medicine as a reference text is almost too uniform. There are occasional wrong references in the index, such as the referral of emphysema in high altitude flying to page 517 instead of 545 (23); and mistakes in the text, such as the dietary prescription of 200 gm. fat, 40 of protein and 400 of carbohydrate for a high protein diet. There is spasmodic use of a telegraphic style in grammar, particularly marked in the omission of some articles when others are retained. All of this suggests hurried writing.

The book has two undesirable physical characteristics which should be mentioned. It has become so bulky that it is not easily manageable. The paper appears of such poor quality that the print is not easily read. For these the publisher should be chided.

In general, the descriptions of disease are succinct, the information on diagnosis and treatment up to date. One can still go to the Osler and find much which is missing in more wordy volumes. It can still be highly recommended.

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AMIALE AUTOCRAT—A Biography of Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes. By Eleanor M. Tilton. Henry Schuman. Price \$5.00.

The qualities which enter into good biographical writing are not always easy to define. Skill in use of the language goes of course without saying. The author must have an intimate acquaintance with the subject of his memoir, as well as with the time and place of the subject's activities. He must not fall into the distemper of which Macaulay accused Boswell. And if the general reader is to approve his work he should shun the pseudo-learned metaphysical approach, so much in vogue today, an approach which Holmes himself would surely have ridiculed. Miss Tilton can certainly not be charged with any of these failings. On the contrary, she has achieved, we believe, a biography of the first rank. Her book is a serious study but it contains just that touch of lightness which seems imperative in dealing with the Amiable Autocrat who was ever poised for flight above the heavy and the dull.

Holmes scientist and Holmes poet and writer are skillfully blended in Miss Tilton's analysis of this intriguing personality, the outstanding quality of whose mind was to process the stimuli of every sort which impinged on it and to send them scintillating forth in terms of his simple humanistic philosophy. One must be convinced from this study that Holmes, if not great, was a very good man; he exercised for years an almost unique influence not only in medicine but in literature and civic affairs, an influence which spread far beyond his local environment. Whatever his rank as a poet, he was far superior to the general run of Nineteenth Century essayist-versifiers. As a matter of fact, Dryden and Pope are at many points equalled, if not surpassed by the New England philosopher and wit who adopted so skillfully the Augustan couplet. One thinks, too, that the Doctor must have had much in common with another medical poet, almost his contemporary—George Crabbe.

Miss Tilton brings all this out; at the same time she does not work in a vacuum. A very real picture of late colonial Cambridge and Boston opens the book, and one constantly

feels that through the eyes of the Autocrat one can see the scene shift down the long years of the Nineteenth Century. Harvard College and medical school, Holmes' training in Paris in the 1830's, his teaching and practice, his prodigious activity as a popular lecturer, his fight against the quacks, his philosophical novels and essays for the Atlantic, his rise to general eminence, and finally the triumph of becoming a legendary figure during one's own lifetime—all are passed in review. The medical side of the picture is done with remarkable "savoir de métier" and one wonders where Miss Tilton acquired her obvious familiarity with the laboratory as well as the consulting room. Doctor and layman can equally enjoy this book, and the author is to be thanked for a delightful and noteworthy contribution.

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RECENT ADVANCES IN ENDOCRINOLOGY. By A. T. Cameron, C.M.G., M.A., D.Sc. (Edin.), F.R.I.C., F.R.S.C., Professor of Biochemistry, Faculty of Medicine University of Manitoba. The Blakiston Company.

The sixth edition of this valuable book on Endocrinology has now appeared. It remains as one of the outstanding compendiums available for the concise presentation of facts concerning physiology of the glands of internal secretion, and of present concepts concerning their various diseases.

As before, the small book is packed full of well documented and easily understood information. The old form has been preserved. Each of the glands is considered in turn, with considerable space being devoted to glandular physiology and biochemistry. The various diseases are then described, the physiology correlated, and the treatment outlined. An excellent bibliography of key references is at the end of each chapter.

The title "Recent Advances" has been justified by inserts, new references, and some deletion of the old in every chapter of the book. The section on thiouracil treatment of hyperthyroidism is the most extensive addition. It is unfortunate that the present widespread use of the less toxic propylthiouracil was not emphasized, but considering the usual lag between writing, proof reading and eventual publication, it is not surprising. New data is also included on radioactive iodine studies in thyroid physiology and in treatment, present concepts in exophthalmos, renal type of hyperparathyroidism, alloxan diabetes mellitus, the steroid hormones, the alarm reaction, experimental nephrosclerosis, prognosis in Addison's disease, metabolism of the sex hormones, the male climacteric, endocrine tumor of the gonads, carcinoma of the prostate, preparation and effects of the growth hormone and adrenocorticotrophic hormone, testosterone therapy in Simmonds' disease, and presumptive hormones of the gastrointestinal tract. Turner's syndrome with dwarfism is listed under pituitary hypofunction—apparently the association with ovarian aplasia and high gonadotropin excretion was not noted in time for reclassification.

The author is a professor of biochemistry and understandably tends to emphasize fundamental physiology and biochemistry, while occasionally not giving much in detail concerning therapeutic management of the various diseases. However, fundamentals are so important in the proper understanding and management of endocrine disease, that this would seem actually to be an advantage. It has helped to keep the volume small.

This text seems at present to be the most valuable one available on this subject, and is recommended for inclusion in the library of everyone who is interested in Endocrinology, or who treats patients with endocrine diseases.

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PHARMACOLOGY THERAPEUTICS AND PRESCRIPTION WRITING. By Walter Arthur Bastedo, Fifth Edition. W. B. Saunders Company, 1947.

The fifth edition of Bastedo's book is practically a new volume, as it has been completely rewritten because of many

advances in pharmacology and therapeutics. The author's guide throughout is the need of the practicing physician who uses drugs in treating sick patients, a viewpoint which is creditably maintained throughout the text without oversight of fundamentals. The book is divided into three parts.

Part I (43 pages) considers general aspects of pharmacology with a page of sage comments on the value of animal experimentation not only to pharmacology and other medical sciences but to animals themselves and human beings. He states it is the responsibility of the medical profession to educate the lay public about this matter.

Part II, the bulk of the text (732 pages), discusses the individual remedies in all essential details of pharmacological actions and therapeutic uses including the author's results in practice. New remedies considered are amino acids, blood fractions, heparin, dicumarol, curare, analeptics, antihistamines, anticonvulsants, folic acid, rutin, thiouracil and propylthiouracil, sulfonamides, penicillin, streptomycin, demerol, metopon, digitalis glycosides, antimalarials, mercurial diuretics, radioactive iodine, BAL (dithiopropanol; dimercaptopropanol) in arsenic, gold and mercury poisoning. BAL is claimed to be so efficacious in mercury poisoning that it may supplant other treatments. Poisoning from drugs and its treatment is well handled throughout. There is a brief summary of cholinergic and adrenergic effects and antag-

onists of autonomic drugs. The use of digitalis for prevention of cardiac hypertrophy is approved, in agreement with Christian. There are many illustrations of pharmacodynamic phenomena and of clinical results, especially side-actions. Few other books credit American pharmacologists with their original contributions as does Bastedo's.

Somewhat in contrast to the exposition of modern materia medica is the occasional inclusion of archaic and irrational drugs which seems to be a carry-over from the old empiricism, and to reflect the author's interest in pharmacy. For instance, calomel, A.B.S. pills and a considerable number of old cathartics are discussed; monobromated camphor is mentioned as a nerve sedative and gelsemium for trifacial neuralgia; for seasickness a great variety of remedies is suggested. "Sun Cholera Drops" and "Squibb's Diarrhea Mixture" are stated to contain spirit of camphor but the reader will wonder why these antiquated polypharmaceutical mixtures are even mentioned. Fortunately these oddities are greatly outweighed by a considerable selection of well justified materia medica.

Part III (23 pages) discusses prescription writing and dispensing of drugs in a sensible, practical manner.

The fifth edition of Bastedo's book is a compendium of remedies which can be recommended to practicing physicians as informative, interesting, and profitable reading.



MEDICAL JURISPRUDENCE

PHYSICIANS—MALPRACTICE—STANDARD OF CARE AND SKILL

PEART, BARATY & HASSARD, *San Francisco*

An action (80 A.C.A. 602) for malpractice was brought against a physician based upon the following facts: It was alleged that the defendant doctor negligently performed his services toward the plaintiff patient and that as a result thereof, a breech birth occurred during which it was alleged that the plaintiff patient suffered lacerations and tearing of the tissue, erosion of the cervix, infection of the uterine genital tract and a general impairment of her health.

Plaintiff, at the trial, testified that the defendant physician had not given her adequate personal attention during the pre-natal period and while she was giving birth to the child. The defendant physician testified that he had given her adequate care and attention and that approximately 3 per cent of the babies born are breech presentations. An expert in obstetrics was then called to the witness stand and he testified that in his opinion the defendant physician did not use the ordinary care and skill of a practicing physician in the locality in the light of practices existing at that time. However, on cross examination, this witness testified that approximately 3 per cent to 5 per cent of births are breech births and that there are at least two approved methods of

practice which physicians can use in such circumstances, in one of which the attending physician does not have to attempt to turn the child. The other practice, employed by some physicians, is to turn the child by manipulation of the abdomen before the labor pains become severe. At the conclusion of the testimony, the trial court granted the motion of the defendant physician for a non suit.

The judgment of non suit was sustained by the District Court of Appeals which held that the defendant doctor, having chosen a recognized and approved method of practice, used the degree of skill and care of a practicing physician in that locality and, therefore, was not guilty of negligence. It was pointed out by the upper court that expert medical testimony was offered only on the point of whether the defendant doctor had selected and used a recognized and approved method of practice and that no expert testimony was offered on the point of whether the defendant physician had given to the patient adequate attention and treatment while she was in the hospital and, therefore, the District Court of Appeals felt that the defendant physician was not guilty of negligence.